

BOOK REVIEWS

CORNELL CONFERENCES ON THERAPY—Volume Four. Edited by Harry Gold, M.D., Managing Editor, David P. Barr, M.D., McKeen Cattell, M.D., Frank Glenn, M.D., Walter Modell, M.D., and George Reader, M.D. The Macmillan Company, New York, 1951. 342 pages. \$3.50.

Previous volumes of the Cornell Conferences on Therapy are undoubtedly familiar to many readers of this journal. This latest volume closely resembles the others in format and method of presentation. The emphasis is on practical aspects of therapy, although at times the discussion is quite theoretical. The editors are to be congratulated on presenting the material in such readable form, since transcriptions of unrehearsed conferences are very difficult to translate into formal presentations for publication. As one means of meeting this problem, the editors have concluded each discussion with a short summary of the various opinions presented. In an effort to be objective, these summaries occasionally do not reflect the degree of divergence of opinion that is apparent in the preceding comments. This is unfortunate on occasions where the speaker has been able to justify his point of view in a logical and thorough manner.

The sections dealing with household poisonings, treatment of diabetic emergencies, management of disorders of cardiac rhythm, medical management of hypertension, and treatment of morphine addiction contain much material of use to the general practitioner. Due to the rapid advances in scientific knowledge and the development of new therapeutic agents, any material published in book form is apt to be outdated, in part, when published. That the problem has not been surmounted in this volume is evidenced in the section on antimicrobials in genito-urinary infections.

The reviewer can recommend this volume for those physicians who desire a practical discussion of common therapeutic problems presented by the staff of one of our outstanding medical schools.

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GENETICS IN OPHTHALMOLOGY. By Arnold Sorsby, Research Professor in Ophthalmology, Royal College of Surgeons and Royal Eye Hospital, London. The C. V. Mosby Company, St. Louis. 1951. 251 pages. \$9.50.

The author points out that, contrary to widespread belief, medical genetics is not concerned with collecting curious pedigrees of the unconsidered trifles of pathology but at the very least is an attempt to elucidate some of the constitutional bases of disease.

In England 50 per cent of blindness is due to cataract, glaucoma and senile macular degeneration. The majority of those afflicted with these conditions are over 60 years of age. Twenty per cent of blindness is due to myopia, congenital, hereditary and developmental defects. The majority of these persons are young or middle-aged; therefore these lesions rank first in terms of years as a cause of blindness.

The book is divided into three sections: (1) a theoretical discussion of the modes of inheritance in genetic diseases, (2) isolated ocular anomalies, and (3) generalized disorders with ocular aspects.

The theoretical discussion of the modes of inheritance and genetic diseases is briefly and very clearly written. This section will probably be of greatest value to the reader who is interested in establishing a pedigree for some ocular diseases. The sections on isolated ocular anomalies and generalized disorders with ocular lesions is well illustrated but the material is covered so briefly that it offers little more than can be found in many textbooks of ophthalmology.

This book deals with a narrow field in the specialty of

ophthalmology. Its greatest assets are its illustrations and its defect is its brevity. The book will probably be used as a reference for those interested in ophthalmic and medical genetics.

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PHARMACOLOGIC PRINCIPLES OF MEDICAL PRACTICE—Second Edition—A Textbook on Pharmacology and Therapeutics for Medical Students, Physicians, and the Members of the Professions Allied to Medicine. By John C. Krantz, Jr., Professor of Pharmacology, School of Medicine, University of Maryland; and C. Jelleff Carr, Associate Professor of Pharmacology, School of Medicine, University of Maryland. The Williams and Wilkins Company, Baltimore, 1951. 1,116 pages. \$10.00.

This second edition of a successful text has appeared only two years after the first edition, the popularity of which is indicated by the fact that it was reprinted four times during this period.

Aureomycin, chloramphenicol, and Terramycin have been added to the antibiotics chapter. Two new chapters have been added to the section on anti-infective drugs, i.e., one on "The Chemotherapy of Tuberculosis" with discussions of streptomycin, para-aminosalicylic acid, the sulfones (Promin, Diasone, and Promizole), and the thiosemicarbazones (Tibione), and the other a short chapter entitled "The Chemotherapy of Rickettsial Diseases." A brief chapter, "Anti-motion Sickness Drugs," has been included, and is devoted mainly to Dramamine. There is also a new chapter on the drugs used in the treatment of arthritis, devoted chiefly to cortisone and ACTH. The second edition includes the changes incorporated in the fourteenth revision of the "U. S. Pharmacopeia," the ninth edition of the "National Formulary," and "New and Nonofficial Remedies, 1950."

All important new drugs have been included together with references to their pharmacology and clinical use. A feature which appealed especially to the reviewer is the preliminary brief physiological discussion which often precedes the pharmacological section and which greatly facilitates a rapid understanding of the action of the drugs discussed. A serious attempt has been made to indicate mechanism of action for each class of drug, even though our knowledge of the events occurring at the cellular and sub-cellular level of organization is unfortunately very meager. References are given to recent research on mechanism of action for those readers who wish to supplement the necessarily brief discussions in the text. A table is given at the end of each chapter which lists the official preparations and dosages, but no indication is given in these tables as to whether the preparations are U.S.P. or N.F.

The only error noted by the reviewer was a reference to ergotoxine as an alkaloid of ergot (p. 899), without any mention of the discovery of Stoll that "ergotoxine" is actually a mixture of the three alkaloids of ergocornine, ergocristine, and ergocryptine. The reviewer believes that the section entitled "Social Aspects of Alcohol" contains a few statements that might be omitted from such a textbook, e.g., "But even social drinking has many adverse effects upon society. Among these are lowering of moral standards . . ." The general validity of such a statement is certainly questionable, and tends to detract from the otherwise scholarly tone of the book.

This work is generally very well written and authoritative, and contains much information not available in other texts. It is highly recommended to the medical profession and students.